



Drunk Drivers Beware

*Law enforcement working overtime this
Labor Day weekend to crack down on drunk drivers*

Impaired driving is one of America's most-often-committed and deadliest crimes. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report, more than 1.4 million people nationwide were arrested in 2003 for driving under the influence. Statistics compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for 2004 show that nearly 13,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver with an illegal blood-alcohol concentration level of 0.08 or higher.

That's why law enforcement in **[State/Community]** will be working overtime this Labor Day weekend cracking down on drunk drivers.

Our message is simple – *You Drink and Drive. You Lose.* Anyone planning on drinking alcohol needs to be responsible and designate a sober driver. With increased sobriety checkpoints, roving patrols, undercover officers and concerned citizens, chances are if you drive impaired, you will be arrested.

Driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.08 and above is illegal here and in every other state. Violators will be spending their money on bail, court, lawyers and towing fees instead of on the last days of their summer vacations. Refuse a sobriety test in many jurisdictions and you can lose your license on the spot and have your car impounded.

This national *You Drink & Drive. You Lose* crackdown is complemented by a \$13.9 million national advertising campaign that puts drivers on notice that if they drive impaired, they will be caught and prosecuted.

Studies from NHTSA show that Americans support tougher enforcement and consider drunk driving an important social issue, ahead of healthcare, poverty, the environment and gun control. Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drinking and driving by others as a threat to their families and themselves. The majority of Americans also support increased enforcement efforts like sobriety checkpoints to protect innocent victims from impaired drivers.

NHTSA's data also show that motorcycle operators have the highest incidence of drunk-driving-related fatal crashes. In 2003, motorcycles accounted for 29 percent, light trucks for 22 percent, passenger cars for 22 percent and large trucks for 1 percent of all fatal crashes where a driver had a BAC level of 0.08 and above. Furthermore, almost half (44 percent) of the 1,501 motorcycle operators who died in single-vehicle crashes in 2003 were intoxicated.

Although national impaired driving highway fatalities during 2003 declined slightly for the first time in several years (down 3 percent from 2002), there is still much more work to be done.

Too many people still don't understand that alcohol, drugs and driving don't mix. Impaired driving is no accident – nor is it a victimless crime.

Fortunately, some of the tragedy that comes from impaired driving crashes could be prevented if everyone would take a few simple precautions before going out.

Always follow these tips for a safer outing:

- Be responsible and don't drive impaired ... you will be caught.
- If you plan to drink, choose a designated driver before going out.
- Take mass transit, a taxicab, or ask a sober friend to drive you home.
- Spend the night where the activity is being held.
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- Always buckle up – it's still your best defense against an impaired driver.

Driving a car or riding a motorcycle while impaired is simply not worth the risk. The consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be significant. Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver's licenses, higher insurance rates, and dozens of other unanticipated expenses from attorney fees, fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, etc.

Plus, there is the added embarrassment, humiliation and potential loss and consequences after informing family, friends and employers.

So, remember the bottom line this Labor Day holiday – no warnings, no exceptions, no excuses:
You Drink & Drive. You Lose.

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